

□ **WASHINGTON, DC – House Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer (MD) spoke on the House Floor today in support of the Fire Grants Reauthorization Act. Below are his remarks as prepared for delivery:**

“Every day, we and our families live under the blanket of protection provided by America’s firefighters—men and women who are willing to risk their lives to safeguard us, our loved ones, and our property. We may not often think about those sacrifices—but every firefighter does. Last year, more than 100 of them died in the line of duty, and tens of thousands more sustained injuries.

“To honor those sacrifices, and to make our communities safer places to live, Congress has worked to become a partner with fire departments across the nation. And today, we can reaffirm that commitment by reauthorizing two successful grant programs for firefighters, FIRE and SAFER. This bill reauthorizes both programs through Fiscal Year 2014, pledging a total of \$2.2 billion per year to our firefighters.

“The FIRE Grant program authorizes \$1 billion per year for state-of-the-art equipment, up-to-date training, and fire prevention programs. These competitive grants will benefit career, volunteer, and combination fire departments throughout the country, as well as state training academies and volunteer EMS departments.

“The SAFER Grant program ensures that our community firehouses never have to sit empty: its \$1.2 billion per year will ensure 24-hour staffing at eligible departments, so that there are always firefighters on duty in case of emergency. It also commits money each year to help volunteer departments recruit and retain new members.

“Since FIRE’s inception in 2000, and SAFER’s in 2004, these programs have won support from Democrats and Republicans alike. Our respect for firefighters, and our commitment to get them the tools and training they need, has transcended party lines—and I hope today will be no different.

“I want to commend my colleagues Harry Mitchell and Bill Pascrell—the father of the Fire Grants Program—for their leadership on this issue, as well as Chairman Gordon and Chairman Wu and my fellow Fire Caucus Co-Chairs Peter King, Rob Andrews, and Jo Ann Emerson.

“I urge all of my colleagues to vote to reauthorize these grants and carry forward this successful

and vital partnership.”

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